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## NEW BOOK COVERS

The book-stall was ever the palace beautiful to the bibliophile, were he the child of poverty or of wealth. The shelves of dusty old books, the drawers full of yellow papers, the cases of antiquities, had an attraction he could not resist; and hours and hours of precious time were given to browsing happily among the treasures. We can fancy him eagerly pulling down one brown volume after another, hurriedly opening it and gazing fondly at it, soon to lose himself in the absorbing pages of one at last. Those were the days when books were valued alone for their literary worth, when print, so long as it was legible, might be any size or shade, when leaves might be long or short, thick or thin—the days when books were the storehouses of learning, and were prized as such. To-day those volumes are still highly valued, but for a different reason—they are relics of another age, and tell us of other men's likes and demands. The money value shows nothing except, perhaps, that the leaves are yellow and dog-eared, the binding cracked.

We do not try very hard to explain our love for books to-day, and our demands. We all know how we love to handle a beautiful book and what delight we take in a well-printed, well-set page. We are not the less appreciative of real worth than the men of earlier days, but more of external beauty, too. Printing and color-copying have made great strides the last few years, and most of us have developed into hypersensitive beings when it comes to type-setting. Every new demand for better print has been eagerly met with good print and something added. More people, and of a different kind than a century ago, are interested in books, and love them. They ask not only for good print, good paper, and good bindings, but for pretty bindings and meaningful ones. Every month brings out something—a startling effect, or perhaps a rich one. Publishers are vying with one another in cover work, and colorists, who before have been so buffeted and repulsed, are finding encouragement, and doing good work.

This year the designs are more beautiful, more varied and pleasing than ever before. Here, as in all popular things, lies the danger of overdoing, and often grotesqueness replaces prettiness. But we soon learn to turn away from the unworthy, while it takes little to show us the really good. Of course, we do not fit any cover to any book—that were the height of absurdity. Still we wonder sometimes whether that may not have happened; let us hope it is only because we do not understand. At times one thinks that in the peculiar combinations of colors, the balancing of figures, there must be a code akin to the heraldic; and again it is only the sympathy and understanding

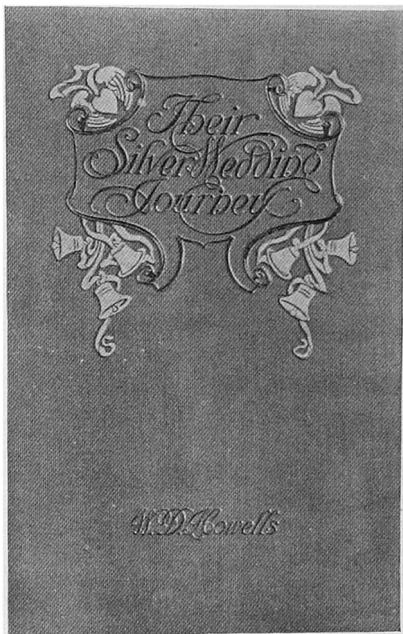
of the designer that catches the eye. Some volumes are worth long study, others tell us much at a glance; some give the title only, others the contents, too. And so sometimes one cannot distinguish what the object was, what the result, and often one finds them subtle and difficult. We shall not think of commercialism, which too often plays a part in the drawing; and what looks well on the bill-board and will attract people to the book at times counts for more than the artistic.

I wonder if we dare divide the color work into Eastern and Western? As I look over the books to come out the next month, I am struck by the difference in tone and feeling between the books of Eastern publishing houses and those of the Western ones. And this time it is the East that makes the color bright and strong, quick suggestion, and startling outlines; the West goes back to old traditions, keeps closely to accepted forms, familiar, and suggesting the hidden treasures of the book—it is the conservative West, the bold East. We are unfortunate in not knowing the designers and their training. Is it true that they of the East have been accepted in the West, and those here are better appreciated by the East?

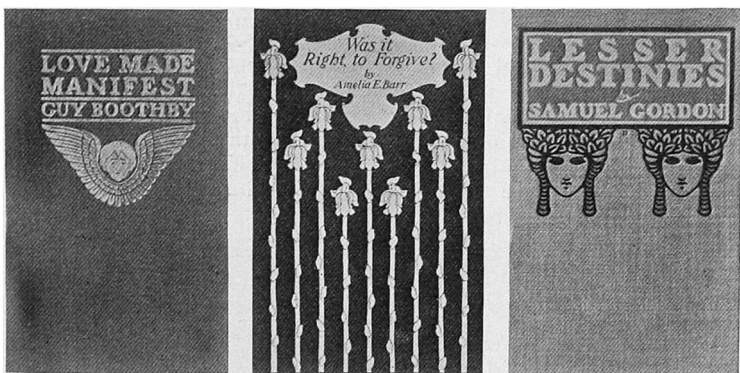
But to be exact, our popular Howells comes to us in soft gray, with a deep-set scroll in bright silver, incrusting wedding bells jangling joyously, and little beribboned, winged hearts fluttering.

The lettering of the title is perhaps the prettiest touch, the ends and curves winding in and out so gracefully, whispering a little of their happy "Silver Wedding Journey."

In somber tan, deep-hued in brown and filled with the deepest cream color, Samuel Gordon's book comes, suggestive and striking as its name, "Lesser Destinies." The two conventional masks below the title-border, again in the dark brown, lend a mystery and a fascination to it that keeps us looking at it hungrily, and vaguely wondering what it's all about. It is not long before vision after vision



COURTESY OF HARPER & BROS., NEW YORK



COURTESY OF H. S. STONE &amp; CO., PUBLISHERS, CHICAGO

crowds about it and fills the simple cover with meanings. This is a new one of Stone's.

The ever-popular *Ben Hur* would seem almost in gala dress in the sea-green buckram, were it not for the conventional Roman torch in greens and browns and golds, richly following the traditional design. The title and author's name are in full plain gilt, giving the whole a dignified tone.

One of the fascinating free covers is that of Stephen Crane's "Open Boat." Although the book is not new, the cover is good enough to be considered. The billowy, silver sea rushing and foaming restlessly toward the dangerous point indicated by the dark light-house and its tiny silver beam is strong and full of life; the small open lettering on the plain green buckram holds the eye but an instant before it is swept along again on the roaring ocean. One turns restlessly to the pages inside. That is a living cover.

A restful but not altogether sedate binding catches our eye. Pier's "The Pedagogues" sounds well, and the little square white house set back in an avenue of tall trees, at the head of a straight sand path, may induce humorous as well as serious thoughts. The two formidable red brick posts at the entrance must have frightened many a nervous child, and so by a series of broad suggestions M. L. P. (whose identity we crave to know) succeeds in awakening interest in the book, for the title would mean far less without the green and white and tan and red of the cover.

There is a real fascination about the two old country women knitting and talking eagerly on the broad sunny porch, undisturbed by the passing carriages and the clatter of the streets, and the old-fashioned lettered title is an added charm. "The Book of True Lovers" is a Chicago publication, and we are not at all ashamed of our Chicago

designer, J. C. Leyendecker, whose work has done much toward popularizing the book.

Still newer books are starting in their vividness. It's a very jolly book, that red-lettered one of yellow, with the man, silhouetted in black, looking gratefully into a warm fire. But just as long as it takes to tell about it does it take to grasp it all, so startling is the detail, but so, too, is the subject—"How to Cook a Husband."

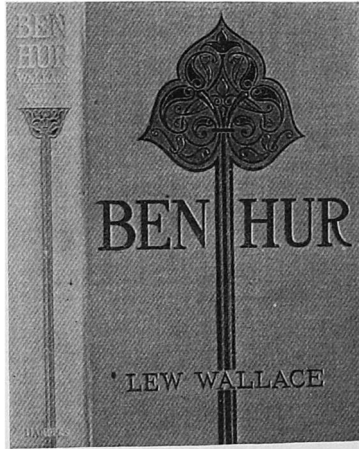
The design for the cover of the "Queen of the Swamp" is charmingly old-fashioned. Done on a dark grayish green buckram, it has the print of an open book at the top; the title on one page in plain black lettering on a dull red ground, on the other a simple oval miniature matted in gold. It is the simplicity and neatness that charm one—that old-fashioned

face and quaintly cut gown—and the initiated may say, too, that such are the qualities which give the book its power of attraction.

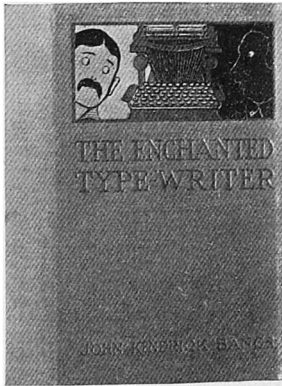
Would it be unkind to say that the design of "The Enchanted Typewriter" is quite as burlesque as often the author is? and that while it is funny and really appropriate, it hardly serves a dignified end? No more can the story. A silhouetted fat profile against black, a flesh-colored full face against white, a red-begilded typewriter between them, and yellow buckram around—clever and witty, one may say.

Margaret Armstrong, of New York, has designed for Houghton, Mifflin & Co. one of the richest and most suggestive covers of this year. It is for an exquisite holiday edition of "The Tent on

the Beach." A deep, full sea-green is richly overlaid with hammered gilt, forming quaint figures. On either side at the bottom, and irresistibly attracting our first glance, are heavily incrustated crabs support-



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NEW YORK



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NEW YORK

ing a graceful group of flag-lilies and hares, with some conventional shell designs scattered up the cover. In the middle, the wavy gold narrows and narrows, till the open sea bursts upon one; and still higher the plain bright gold letters of the title. It is a good cover, demanding a far more accurate and detailed description than this.

Still another suggestive cover is from a design by Bertram A. Goodhue. The color scheme of this is not yet decided, but even as it is the effect is most pleasing—a gray buckram bordered with a deep



COURTESY OF HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & CO.  
BOSTON

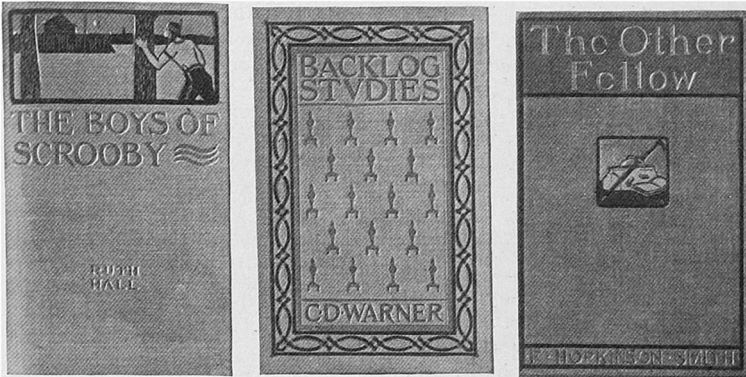
red conventional pattern, the inner rectangle dotted in gold, with gold lettering, and andirons, andirons, andirons, until one is fairly carried deep into Warner's charming "Back Log Studies."

One of the most forceful of the Christmas bindings is that of "The Helpers." Mr. B. Wilton Tripp, of Providence, has carefully weighed color and mass in this design. The strong, stalwart figure of the miner in red flannel shirt, with a light blue kerchief knotted around his throat, his pick-ax resting under his sinewy arm, his dark matted hair hanging low on his forehead, against a background of rugged mountains, relieved by bright blue sky and golden sinking sun, is the sort of thing that stimulates one to open the book gladly.

Still another clever cover is designed by a New Yorker.

Berkley Smith has an odd color scheme in the yellowish red background, relieved in the middle by a tiny group of traveling-bag, umbrella, and note-book in greens against gold. The lettering of the title, "The Other Fellow," and the author's name, is in plain gilt, bordered by a heavy black line. It is an awfully tempting cover, and promises refreshing things.

One that must appeal to boys is done on cold gray in silver lettering, "The Boys of Scrooby." The upper portion is decorated by a black-lined night scene—an armed Indian is stealing in shadow of trees toward a walled fort; the background is the deep blue sky, with



COURTESY OF HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & CO., BOSTON

a tiny silver moon hanging watchfully over the sleeping town. One shivers, in spite of one's self.

This cover, done by the Decorative Designers of New York, is more conventional. "Under the Cactus Flag" is deep red, bordered with green spiked cactus leaves, the inner part relieved by a standard of green and red with its golden eagle and plain staff—altogether a thoughtful piece of work.

There is a clever one by E. Boyd Smith, of Paris, which amuses us and arouses a tremendous curiosity. In the lower left-hand corner of this tan cover is a child's profile, and a tiny hand holding a twig, on which is perched a cawing blackbird; up above, to the right, listening intently, are two little white children, and one unmistakable pickaninny, with pigtailed on end and eyes glaring excitedly, all in profile. What has all this to do with "Plantation Pageants"? Only the book will tell.

A far less interesting one, and yet new in idea, is "Loveliness." The lettering is plain gilt (designed by Mrs. Henry Whitman, of Boston) on bright red, with just a heliotype reproduction of the dog of the story. I fancy it is the oddity of the design which will attract the children.

"Marshfield the Observer" has a somber suggestive binding of gray, lined deeply in blue-black, the plain thick white lettering just relieving the monotony, and the half-page conventional rose design filling in well the lower part. We look at it thoughtfully, and call it good; but the book may tell us more of the cover.

Amelia Barr's "Was It Right to Forgive?" is bound prettily enough in bright red, with a conventional orchid (may we call it?) arranged in rows and rows. "Rose Island" is done in pale gray, covered with

curves and spirals pleasing to see. "My Father and I" is in indescribable blue, bordered by a leaf pattern. Often, of course, the title can be indicated by such conventional work only, and the binding then is not likely to appeal to many.

There is the sort of book—the art book—with one of the pictures it contains on the cover. But we are so familiar with that sort, and the charm lies in the first look. We shall leave this to the Christmas buyer.

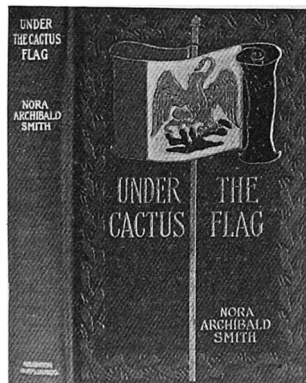
I choose to call another class the pictorial cover. It is popular because so odd and attractive, and perhaps, too, because so happy a survival of the old children's picture books. Mansfield and Wessel and R. H. Russell have busied themselves with this sort of thing most successfully. Of the newer books, one must appeal to us all—the irresistible "Alice Through the Looking Glass." It carries us back to the old days of absorbing Alice. They are all on the cover

beckoning us to visit them again, the queen looking out of the corner of her eyes at the stern old king, who is standing with feet wide spread on the checkerboard, and back, way back, crowd all the old friends, each one calling up a jollier remembrance. Of course there is the companion, too, the conventional figures so dear to us. Another of Miss Macmanus's is the well-planned "Five Hundred Miniature Book-Plates," the traditional cameo head of Kadmos, surrounded by the Greek alphabet, with the title above and number below—a well-balanced and pleasing design.

Now the very newest books which Russell is editing: One has a stirring cover, well fitted to its subject; Peixotto has designed an army on the forced march, tramping along full of life and vigor and seriousness, the flag waving. It is full of action; one can feel the regular footfalls and hear the drum's tap, tap. This is for the Almanac of the Revolution.

It is a fascinating thing, this dressing up of books, and a good one. It is too bad we don't often know the designer; while the knowledge might not add to our appreciation, it would be gratifying at times, and we want him to know how we enjoy his work, or, perhaps, disapprove it.

EDNA HARRIS.



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